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Security forces in Tibet and Xinjiang routinely engage in arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and execution without due process, punishing even nonviolent protests against Chinese rule. Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims face military curbs on freedom of movement and official control of their religious practice. Religious adherents from numerous Chinese faith communities are often forced to violate or renounce basic tenets of their faith.

Since 1999, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended that China be designated as a Country of Particular Concern, or CPC. China has been classified as a CPC by the U.S. State Department since 2000.

China is ranked Not Free in the 2009 edition of Freedom in the World, Freedom House's annual survey of political rights and civil liberties, and in the 2009 version of Freedom of the Press.